F-35 Lightning II Program

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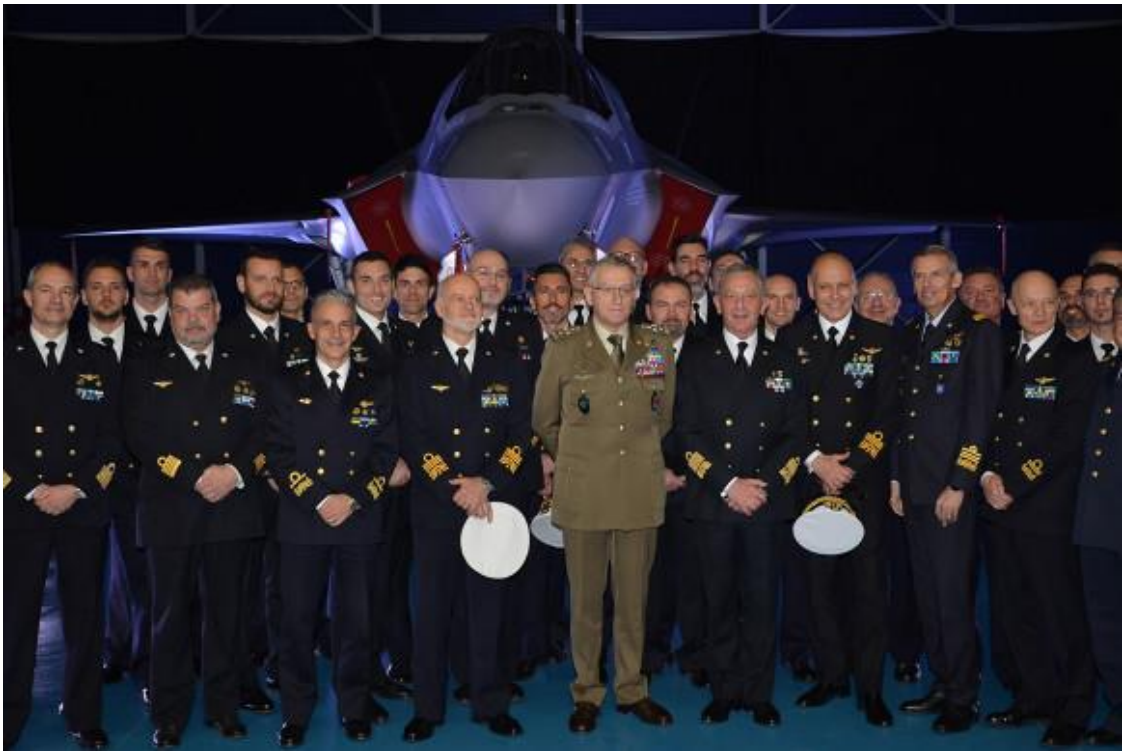
Italy's Ministry of Defense Takes Delivery of First F-35B Assembled in Cameri

Joint Program Office Public Affairs and Ministry of Defense Release



Chief of Italian Defense General Staff, Gen. Claudio Graziano (center) and various Italian Ministry of Defense General Staff members and representatives from the F-35 Joint program Office and Lockheed Martin at Cameri, Italy, Final Assembly and Check Out (FACO) plant, for the delivery ceremony Jan. 25, 2018. Photo courtesy of Italian Ministry of Defense

CAMERI, Italy -- On Jan. 25, 2018 Italy's Defense Ministry has taken delivery of the first F-35B Short Take-Off/Vertical Landing (STOVL) Lightning II assembled outside the United States.

The aircraft, that will be part of the Marina Militare [Italian Navy] assets, was fully assembled at the Cameri Final Assembly and Check Out (FACO) plant.

The delivery ceremony was attended by Chief of Italian Defense General Staff, Gen. Claudio Graziano; Chief of Italian Navy, Admiral Valter Girardelli; Director of Aircraft Armaments Directorate, (ARMAEREO), Italian Air Force Gen. Francesco Langella; Air Commodore Charles Docherty, F-35 Joint Program Office; Leonardo Aircraft Division Managing Director, Filippo Bagnato and Mr. Douglas Wilhelm, Lockheed Martin F-35 Program Management Vice President.

"Today's delivery is a proud day for Italian Defense capabilities and underscores Italy as a critical part of the F-35 family," said Air Commodore Charles Docherty, Director Hybrid Product Support Integrator (HPSI), F-35 Joint Program Office. "The F-35B's assembled here will provide a significant increase in capability and unique expeditionary capabilities for the Italian Armed Forces for decades to come."

The F-35B delivered to the Italian Navy will take some test flights in Cameri. Subsequently, an Italian pilot will fly it to Naval Air Station Patuxent River, MD., to undergo the required Electromagnetic Environmental Effects certification or 'triple E testing.'

By assembling its first F-35B, the most complex variant – from the technological point of view - of the aircraft, the Italian FACO has shown the ability and high level of the Italian aerospace industry, confirming to be a center of excellence for F-35 in Europe. Not just Italian Forces benefit from the facility there are Italian made components on every single F-35 flying today.

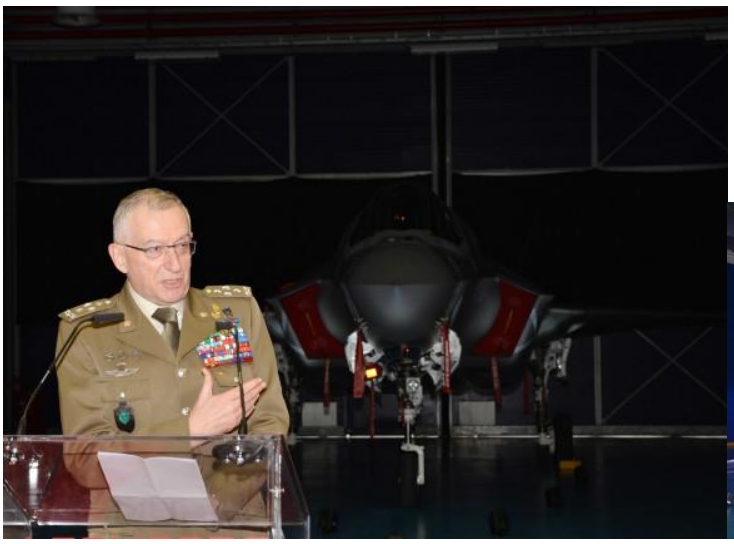
The F-35 Lightning II is a fifth generation fighter plane combining the most advanced stealth technology with fighter aircraft speed and agility, as well as sensor fusion for the most effective information acquisition and management procedures, network-enabled operations, and advanced support functions.

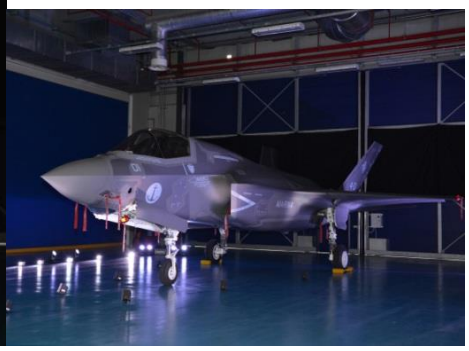
The F-35B short takeoff/vertical landing variant is the world's first supersonic STOVL stealth aircraft. This fifth-generation strike fighter is being developed to perform ground attacks, reconnaissance, and air defense missions with 5th generation stealth capability, while focusing on affordability. Designed to operate from austere locations and air-capable ships close to front-line combat zones; it can also take off and land conventionally from longer runways on major bases. The F35B is a "game-changer" on the battlefield that gives our warfighters the decisive advantage.

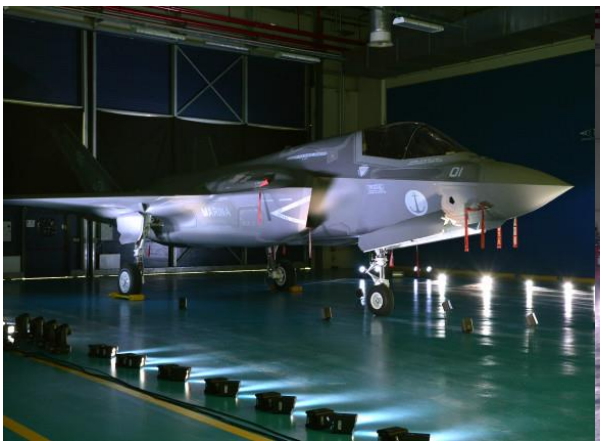
The F-35B can do what no other plane has ever done: accelerate past the speed of sound in flight, and then make vertical landings. A swiveling jet pipe capable of rotating 95 degrees in 2.5 seconds redirects the engine thrust downward, while additional lift fans beneath the cockpit and wings combine to produce 40,000 pounds of vertical thrust. By October 2011, an F-35B was making its first successful vertical landings at sea, descending onto the deck of a small Marine Corps amphibious assault ship.

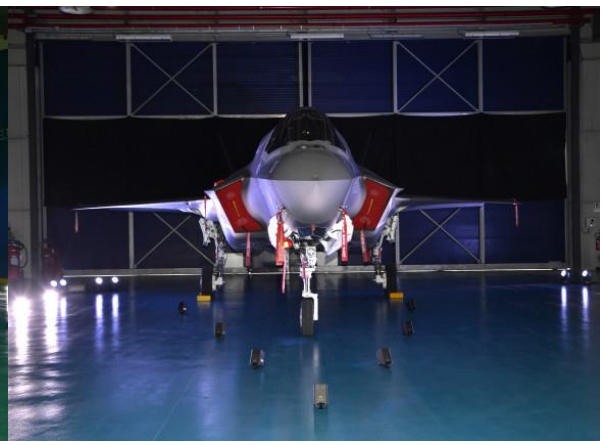
Two hundred and sixty-five F-35s have been built and delivered to various nations. They are intended to replace previous generation aircraft in at least 12 countries. F-35A and B [models] procured by Italy will replace Panavia Tornado, AMX and AV-8B aircraft currently used by the Italian Air Force and Navy. Today's event is the result of solid cooperation between the Ministry of Defense, its industrial partner, Leonardo, and Lockheed Martin.

Leonardo, in cooperation with Lockheed Martin Aeronautics, runs the Italian FACO thanks to a team of over 800 highly specialized personnel, engaged in assembling the F-35A (conventional take-off and landing) and F-35B STOVL variants, as well as building F-35 wings.









(Top left) Chief of Italian Defense General Staff, Gen. Claudio Graziano speaks during the F-35B Short Take-Off/Vertical Landing (STOVL) Lightning II delivery ceremony at Final Assembly and Check Out (FACO) plant in Cameri, Italy Jan 25, 2018. Photos courtesy of Italian Ministry of Defense

In 2014 the Italian FACO was selected by the U.S. Department of Defense as the European center for Heavy Airframe Maintenance, Repair, Overhaul and Upgrade (MRO&U). The plant covers an area of 40 hectares, [approximately 100 acres] and includes 22 buildings, for more than 1 million square meters [approximately 10 million sq. ft.] dedicated to production, 11 assembly stations and five maintenance, repair, overhaul and upgrade areas.

To date nine F-35As and an F-35B have been delivered by FACO-Cameri, the only F-35 production facility located outside the U.S. Four are now stationed at Air Force Base Luke, Ariz., for the international pilot training program, while five are stationed at Amendola Air Force Base.

Moreover, FACO-Cameri, according to plans, will build 29 F-35As for the Netherlands Air Force (RNLAF). The plant- currently engaged in building 835 wing box sets for all F-35 program participants, - is able to meet future requests of other European partners.

On 7 September 2015 the first F-35 built at FACO-Cameri made the first international flight in F-35 program history, and in February 2016, the F-35A made the program's first trans-Atlantic crossing. In December 2016, the Italian Air Force's first F-35s arrived at the first in-country base, Amendola. The Italian Air Force has already achieved over 1,700 flight hours with its F-35A fleet.